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CHI/AT/Bues 77-037

APPROVED FOR RELEASE DATE: OCT 2001

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CONF:

AN OBSERVER WITH A SOUND KNOWLEDGE OF VIETNAMESE POLITICS HAS PROVIDED AN INTERESTING ASSESSMENT OF VIET-NAM'S FOREIGN POLICY AND POSSIBLE TACTICS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE US-//Y

//THE OBSERVER NOTES THAT VIETNAMESE EFFORTS TO IM-PROVE RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS AND THE GENERALLY LOW PROFILE THEY HAVE MAINTAINED ARE DESIGNED, IN PART, TO STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITION WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BEFORE THEY BEGIN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE US. HE FEELS, HOWEVER, THAT THE VIETNAMESE OVERESTIMATE THE LEVERAGE THESE TIES WILL HAVE WITH THE US.//Y

//HE BELIEVES THAT, LARGELY BECAUSE OF POOR BUREAU-CRATIC COMMUNICATIONS, THE VIETNAMESE HAVE LITTLE IN-FORMATION ON MIAS. IN HIS VIEW, THE RECENT RELEASE OF 12 NAMES WAS THE RESULT OF CONSIDERABLE EFFORT AND WAS

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NOT MERELY THE CYNICAL DISCLOSURE OF A FEW NAMES FROM

A MUCH LARGER LIST. IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT US PER
SONNEL WOULD EVER BE ALLOWED TO CARRY OUT SEARCHES FOR

MIAS OR KIAS WITHIN VIETNAM.//Y

ATIONS TO BREAK THE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE MIA AND WAR
REPARATIONS ISSUES. HE BELIEVES AN ULTIMATE CONNECTION
IS INEVITABLE UNLESS THE VIETNAMESE CAN OBTAIN WHAT THEY
WANT FROM THE US. HE ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THE VIETNAMESE
MAY NOW BELIEVE THEY HAVE OVERPLAYED THEIR HAND ON THE
MIA ISSUE AND WORRY THAT DOMESTIC PRESSURE ON THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO OBTAIN A FULL ACCOUNTING FROM HANOI
IS SLACKENING.//Y

//IN THIS REGARD, THE PRIMARY INTEREST OF THE VIETNAMESE IS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE--INCLUDING AID FROM THE
US. IN THE OBSERVER'S VIEW, IT SHOULD BE RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT TO THE VIETNAMESE WHETHER US AID IS CONSIDERED
"WAR REPARATIONS" OR "HUMANITARIAN AID." HE SUGGESTS

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THAT THE US MAY BE ABLE TO STRING CUT ANY PAYMENTS AND MAKE SUPSEQUENT INSTALLMENTS CONTINGENT UPON A PROPER VIETNAMESE ATTITUDE IN APPLYING AND EXPLAINING THE AID. HE ALSO SPECULATES THAT THE THIEU REGIME'S FROZEN ASSETS IN THE US MAY BE A MORE IMPORTANT NEGOTIATING CARD THAN IS GENERALLY RECOGNIZED.//4

//AS SUGGESTED BY VIETNAMESE SENSITIVITY TO THE CRITICISM OF US ANTI-WAR ACTIVISTS. THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE
MIGHT WORK TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE US IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.
THE VIETNAMESE ARE BECOMING AWARE THAT INTERNATIONAL
OPINION APPLIES TO THEM AS WELL AS TO OTHER COUNTRIES.
AND THAT IT MIGHT DELAY OR HINDER THE ATTAINMENT OF THEIR
OBJECTIVES.//Y

//IN ADDITION. THE OBSERVER NOTES THAT THE VIETNAMESE APPEAR TO BE TRYING TO HOLD THE SOVIETS AT ARM'S LENGTH POLITICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY AND TO DISTANCE THEMSELVES AS FAR AS POSSIBLE FROM SINO-SOVIET COMPETITION.

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